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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Draft report

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Chapter I
Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Indigenous children and indigenous youth

1. Poverty and inequality are structural problems and the positive impacts of social policies are often not sufficient to reduce the disparities in access to human development opportunities for indigenous children and youth. Human development is the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and of improving their well-being. Owing to their marginalization, indigenous children and youth either do not have or struggle to have the opportunity to lead lives that they value or to improve their situation in order to have the chance to lead full lives.

2. The economic model of extractivism and social exclusion, in addition to historical factors of colonization and discrimination, is creating new gaps between indigenous children and youth and the rest of the population. The historical gaps have been aggravated by these new problems and require special attention.

3. It needs to be stated that the plight of children and youth in the African region is quite severe and that the situation of indigenous children and youth is even more critical because they are the primary victims of war, poverty, hunger, starvation, malnutrition and disease. Many indigenous children and youth make their way through life impoverished, abandoned, uneducated, malnourished, discriminated against, neglected and vulnerable. For them, life is a daily struggle for survival. For many, the concept of childhood as a time to grow, learn, play and feel safe is meaningless.

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4. The Permanent Forum acknowledges the efforts and initiatives of States and United Nations agencies to promote bilingual education, develop health programmes and provide skills to indigenous children and youth. In this regard, the Permanent Forum encourages States and United Nations agencies to increase their efforts in a targeted and wide-scale manner to respond to the needs and priorities of indigenous children and youth, especially in the areas of education and health, in a manner that is culturally sensitive and ensures their overall well-being consistent with articles 11, 14, 41 and 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

5. The Permanent Forum acknowledges the entry into force on 14 April 2014 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. In this regard, it recommends that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, other United Nations agencies and States support the dissemination of the guide to this Optional Protocol, including its translation into different languages and the building of capacity among indigenous organizations and institutions to make effective use of the Optional Protocol in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous children and youth.

6. The Permanent Forum urges States to generate statistics disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, indigenous identity, language skills and self-identification, and to provide the sources of data to allow for a more accurate assessment of whether indigenous children and youth are actually benefiting from the expenditure earmarked for them. The Permanent Forum also urges United Nations funds and programmes to support member States in generating statistics upon request and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and academic centres to produce a toolkit that provides a comprehensive and an accurate overview of human development indicators among indigenous children and youth.

7. The Permanent Forum further urges States to improve their collection of data on self-harm and suicide among indigenous children and youth, as well as on violence against indigenous women, boys and girls, to facilitate better understanding of the extent of the problem. States should commit to reducing the incidence of self-harm, violence and suicide among indigenous children and youth through the allocation of adequate resources to holistic prevention and support services, in partnership with indigenous peoples.

8. The Permanent Forum urges States to implement articles 11 and 13 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular in relation to the practice and revitalization of indigenous peoples' languages, cultural traditions and customs as a way of building resilience and preventing self-harm, violence and suicide.

9. The Permanent Forum also urges States to fund and deliver training in suicide prevention and mental health awareness to all teaching and non-teaching staff in all indigenous schools. The development of localized training programmes adapted to each culture consistent with articles 11, 14, 15 and 31 should be encouraged.

10. The Permanent Forum further urges the General Assembly to proclaim an international year of the world's indigenous children and youth.